

Appendix B. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

Because each locality has unique resources, conditions, and issues, guidelines for recreational and open space planning must be evaluated in terms of the local situation. Guidelines must be used judiciously as basic norms, subject to modification as local needs arise.

Although it is impossible to settle on just one precise definition for the word “recreation,” one thing that can be agreed upon is that leisure plays a major role in an individual’s level of life satisfaction. Whether one chooses to define themselves by the sheer rock face that they climb with grace and precision, or leave behind the turmoil of daily routine with a contemplative walk in the forest, the physical and psychological benefits of recreation are endless. Herein lies the value of parks and open space to the communities.

In order to meet the demand for recreational areas and facilities and provide an outlet for healthy recreational opportunities, there must be a plan. The information that follows is one tool that urban planners and developers and leisure service professionals can use to gain perspective on the factors that must be considered in the design of recreation areas and facilities, and the utilization of open space for recreation opportunities. The guidelines stated here will assist in the development of long-range plans for park and recreational needs and resources, while inviting the reader to consider this important question: how much is enough?

The first step in the planning process is to acknowledge that the resources in each locality are unique, as are the needs of the community. For this reason, it is most important to realize that the guidelines presented here are meant to assist in the planning process, but are subject to modification to tailor the plan to the resources, issues, and needs of the locality.

Planning guidelines and considerations

The 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* addresses several basic categorical areas important to the planning process: area guidelines, space guidelines, capacity guidelines, design guidelines, maintenance guidelines and playground guidelines. These categories were selected based on the experience and observation of professional planners and park and recreation researchers. They represent reasonable and applicable guidelines for conditions within the commonwealth. In addition, the concept of sustainable design has recently been developed to recognize the relationship of human civilization to the natural world. Explanations of the categories mentioned above, along with descriptions of other related terms, are provided for users of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*. It is important to note that many states and professional recreation planners are getting away from the use of standards because they have found exceptions to so many of the standards we have used in the past. Every situation is a little different and the user of the following material should not consider this information to be the final word on how much of any facility or area a population of any given size should have available. Trends in participation rates can greatly affect demand in any given activity, making standards useless in determining needs.

Quality of the Experience

Experience is one consideration that is often overlooked in the planning process, but is an essential and ever present factor in the development and design of recreation facilities, areas and open space. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) devised by the United States Department Agriculture Forest Service addresses the concept of user experience and the correlation to recreation planning. “The basic assumption underlying the Recreation Opportunity

Spectrum is that options to realize the number of recreational experiences sought by users are best assured by providing a diverse set of recreation opportunities. A recreation opportunity is a chance for a person to engage in a specific recreation activity within a specific environmental setting to realize a predictable recreation experience. Thus, the ROS conceives of the recreation management and planning task as a behaviorally-based production process, with three distinct aspects of demand that must be considered.”

- “First, visitors seek opportunities to participate in certain activities.”
- “Second, visitors seek certain settings in which they can recreate.”
- The third aspect of demand is “desired experiences” which is a product of providing the second.

“In offering diverse settings where participants can pursue various activities, the broadest range of experiences can be realized. The task of the recreation planner and manager, then, is to formulate various combinations of activity and setting opportunities to facilitate the widest possible achievements of desired experiences – or to preserve options for various types of recreation opportunities.” To accomplish this, consider the following points in devising an effective recreation/park plan:

- When possible, go beyond the demand/supply/needs assessment of the locality, and approach the community for input on what opportunities they would like to see developed in their area.
- Think about what kind of experiences you want to provide for users and incorporate that experience into the planning process.
- Conduct a detailed assessment of the natural resources that will be used to put the plan into action, and let the capability/condition of the land dictate the planning goals.
- One consideration that is not addressed by current planning processes is the benefit of large, undeveloped tracts of land being allocated for the “wilderness/primitive experience.” As the population of the commonwealth continues to grow and urban development progresses, it is more important than ever to insure that open space free of parking lots and swimming pools is available for future generations. The benefits of wilderness trails and natural settings, particularly in urban/rural areas, are boundless and should be planned for.

While the goal of the recreationist is to obtain satisfying experiences, the goal of the recreation resource manager becomes one of providing the opportunities for obtaining these experiences. By managing the natural resource setting, and the activities that occur within it, the manager is providing the opportunities for recreation experiences to take place. Therefore, for both the manager and the recreationist, recreation opportunities can be expressed in terms of three principal components: the activities, the setting and the experiences.

For management and conceptual convenience, possible mixes or combinations of activities, settings and probable experience opportunities have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum. This continuum is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and is divided into six classes. The six classes, or portions along the continuum, and the accompanying class names have been selected and conventionalized because of their descriptiveness and utility in land and resource management planning and other management applications.

Each class is defined in terms of its combination of activity, setting and experience opportunities. Subclasses may be established to reflect local or regional conditions as long as aggregations can be made back to the six major classes for regional or national summaries. An example of a subclass may be further breakdown of “Roaded Natural” into subclasses based on paved, oiled or dirt surfaced roads, which in turn reflects amount of use, or a further breakdown of “Primitive” based upon aircraft or boat use.

Table 24 below describes the general environmental and societal settings that are outlined in the ROS. When a specific activity and desired experience is matched with the appropriate setting, the environmental planner is then able to design an area that will fulfill the expectation of the user.

Table 24

ROS Setting Characterization					
Primitive	Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	Semi-Primitive Motorized	Roaded Natural	Rural	Urban
Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of others is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use within the area is not permitted.	Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions are present, but are subtle. Motorized use is not permitted.	Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions are present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted.	Area is characterized by predominantly natural appearing environments with moderate evidence of the appearances of the sights and sounds of man. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventionalized motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design facilities.	Area is characterized by substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities are often provided for specific activities. Moderate densities are provided far away from developed sites. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking are available.	Area is characterized by substantially urbanized environment, although the background may have natural-appearing elements. Renewable resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities. Vegetative cover is often exotic and manicured. Sights and sounds of humans on-site are predominant. Large numbers of users can be expected, both on-site and in nearby areas. Facilities for highly intensified motor use and parking are available with forms of mass transit often available to carry people throughout the site.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments. As conceived, the spectrum has application to all lands regardless of ownership or jurisdiction. Its use in the national forest system will facilitate the consideration, determination and implementation of the recreation management role.

For more information on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), contact the Forest Service at:

USDA Forest Service
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests

Area guidelines

Area guidelines are used to determine the number of acres of recreational and park lands needed by a locality. These guidelines are usually expressed as a minimum number of acres per 1,000 people in the population.

The recommended area guideline for local recreation and park sites in Virginia is 10 acres per 1,000 people, which represents a minimum acreage that should be exceeded when possible. Though this recommendation is sufficient for the inventory and development of parks in rural and less densely populated areas, it is however more difficult to meet this standard in an urban setting. Where you have more extensive development, higher population numbers in a small area, and a lack of available and affordable open space, recreational development must be planned to accommodate the needs of as large and diverse a user group as possible. It is important to disperse park opportunities evenly throughout the locality so that each sector has convenient access to parks and open space, and that the planning and development process provides for as many different kinds of activities as the resources will allow.

Another crucial factor that must be incorporated into the demand-supply-needs inventory equation is the existence and accessibility to private facilities such as schools, churches, and clubs. Though these facilities play an important part in accommodating the recreation needs of a community, planners must also note that these facilities are not available to everyone at all times. They are not accessible during normal operating hours, and if a membership is required, the user group is restricted to members of that organization only. If the needs identified by the community are not met by the existing publicly accessible facilities, then local planners must devise options for meeting those needs.

In meeting the 10 acres per 1,000-area standard, planners should consider three major local park classifications -- the neighborhood park, the community park, and the district park. Each of these park categories has its own unique function and service radius within the locality. Frequently, local government will interchange the names of the park types, but their functions within the locality remain unchanged. Table __ on page __ summarizes area guidelines for each park type.

Space guidelines

Space guidelines deal with actual site planning and give the amount of land or water necessary for a particular activity (e.g., the number of square feet needed for a tennis court or acres needed for a football field). These guidelines are usually constants and not subject to variation.

Capacity and space guidelines are presented in Tables __ and __ 7 on pages __ and __. These guidelines determine the amount of land or water required to accommodate a particular activity within a park complex and determine how many people can be accommodated during an average day, week, or season. To reiterate a point made in the area guidelines section, an assessment of the existing resources should be conducted, the development plan shaped to accommodate as many different types of opportunities as possible, and utilize the natural layout of the resources or landscape to dictate where to develop the appropriate opportunities. The tables show the capacity and space guidelines for the most popular types of outdoor recreational activities in the commonwealth.

Capacity guidelines

Capacity guidelines relate to the instant, daily or seasonal capacity of a particular recreational facility. They aid in the development of management plans and/or determinations of facility adequacy to meet local needs. When the capacity standard of a particular facility is known, the planner can then determine (based on local demand) how many facilities are needed. Capacity guidelines are subject to variations depending on the quality of the facility and its management, e.g., a night-lighted ball field has a greater daily capacity than an unlit field. Many localities are constructing rectangular multi-purpose fields that are lighted and have all weather surfaces. These large fields can be used for multiple activities such as soccer, football, lacrosse, field hockey, rugby, and many other activities. The daily capacity of such a field changes depending on how it is configured and which sports are being played.

Two additional facets of carrying capacity that affect the users experience and the resources themselves on the ground level are physical and social carrying capacity. Physical carrying capacity relates to the maximum use that a recreation area can sustain without resource degradation. This relates also to the maintenance guidelines discussed further in this section, and is imperative to the upkeep and preservation of existing resources. It is possible to increase the physical carrying capacity of an area by hardening defined impact areas for each activity. The second is social carrying capacity, and relates to the users expectation of what kind of experience they are hoping to have. Social carrying capacity is a very important consideration in the design and development of recreation and open space resources. In order to maximize the satisfaction of the user, it is imperative to design the area or facility in such a way as to provide the most appropriate environment for the activity at hand.

Social interaction level is an aspect of social carrying capacity that can be a determinant of the potential for user conflict in a recreation area. An example of user conflict between two substantially different users might be paddlers and personal watercraft (pwc) users; they are both using the same resources, but in very different ways. Their expectations for the experience that they are seeking, the environment in which they choose to participate and the atmosphere that they create with respect to the level of presence that they have are all factors that might contribute to user conflict.

For further information on the concept of user expectation, refer to the section above on “Experience,” as well as the U.S.D.A. Forest Service’s Recreation Opportunity Spectrum model.

Design guidelines

The guidelines for designing park and open space areas are as varied and diverse as the resources that will support them. Depending on the kind of experience that is intended and the type of user to be served, there are many different outlets for obtaining park and open space design guidelines. The schematic sketches in the latter part of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the size, service area, administrative responsibilities, purpose, character, location and potential facilities that might exist on various levels from a neighborhood playground or play lot to a state park.

As there are endless resources for obtaining park and open space design guidelines, a few key sources are provided below for readers of the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan*.

The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox – Connecting Our Common Wealth
203 Governor Street, Suite 326

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vopappB.doc

Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-6124
www.dcr.virginia.gov

National Recreation and Park Association

22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148-4501
Phone: 703-858-0784 Fax: 703-858-0794
E-mail: info@nrpa.org

USDA Forest Service

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019-3050

National Park Service

U. S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street, Fifth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-7013
www.nps.gov

Trails for the Twenty-First Century: Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails (Second Edition)

Charles A. Flink; Kristine Olka; Robert M. Searns

Rails-To-Trails Conservancy

1100 17th Street, 10th Floor, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 331-9696
greenways@transact.org

Maintenance guidelines

Maintenance guidelines refer to the desired level of maintenance for recreation facilities and areas within a park system, as well as those activities or individual work elements that support maintenance requirements.

Despite the almost endless variety of tasks and methods associated with the upkeep of any system of outdoor recreational facilities, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has established a set of guidelines. *Park Maintenance Guidelines* (1986) was developed from years of research and evaluation. This document covers a multitude of maintenance levels, methods and practices. Due to its length and complexity, there is no attempt to summarize the document within the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*. However, copies may be obtained by writing the National Recreation and Parks Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148.

Playground guidelines

Playground guidelines are used to evaluate a playground to identify any features that could lead to an injury to a child. Playground guidelines address issues such as protective surfacing, head

entrapment hazards, entanglement hazards and equipment location. These guidelines are designed for persons concerned with public playground safety.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimated that more than 70% of injuries on both public and home playground equipment resulted from falls, especially falls to the surface beneath the equipment. Other reasons for injuries included impact from moving equipment (13%), the majority of which involved children under the age of six, running or bumping into stationary equipment (5%), and contact with hazards such as protrusions, pinch points, sharp edges and hot surfaces (7%). (*Playground Equipment Related Injuries and Deaths*, April 1990, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207)

An average of 15 playground equipment-related deaths are reported each year, according to data from the CPSC, and more than 40% of these involve children under the age of six. Fatal injuries most often involved entanglement in ropes tied to or caught on equipment, falls, impacts from tipovers or failures of equipment, impact with moving swings, and head entrapment (*Hazard Sketch: Playground Equipment-Related Injuries and Deaths*, October 1996, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207)

In Virginia, more than 400 children under the age of 15 were hospitalized after falling from playground equipment between 1994 and 1997. Costs associated with these hospitalizations totaled \$1,858, 289, or an average of \$4600 per hospitalization (Center for Injury and Violence Prevention, Virginia Department of Health).

MOVE TO FOOTNOTE IN TABLE 31

Turnover refers to the number of times that a particular facility may be used by different individuals or groups during a day. For example, a baseball field might have a turnover factor of four games per day, since the average warm up and game will last almost two hours. Thus, the planner can reasonably expect to accommodate up to eight teams per field, per day.

An activity day is the participation by one person in any recreational activity during any part of one day. If an individual swims, picnics, and plays baseball during the day, that individual has generated three activity days (occasions) of recreation, one each for swimming, picnicking, and baseball.

Sustainable design

Sustainable design is a concept that adds a holistic approach to societal growth. This concept ascertains that in order to insure that the well being of the natural world is not compromised in the face of development, it is important to plan communities in a manner that considers the value of natural heritage resources. From the revitalization of existing facilities in lieu of new development, to designing neighborhoods such a way that open space is preserved, sustainable design recognizes the economic, environmental and social value of the commonwealth's natural resources. For an in-depth presentation on the concept of sustainable design, see *Better Models for Development in Virginia – Ideas for Creating, Maintaining, and Enhancing Livable Communities* by Edward T. McMahon with Sara S. Hollberg and Shelley Mastran.

In 1991, the National Park Service developed guidelines and recommendations for incorporating principles of sustainable design regarding natural resources, cultural resources, site planning and design, architectural design, building ecology, interpretation, energy and utilities, waste disposal, and facilities maintenance and operation.

Urban guidelines

One of the greatest challenges that urban planners and natural resource managers face is how to most effectively utilize available resources within an urban area to meet the recreational and open space needs of their citizens. When you consider all of the diverse activities that make up the recreation/leisure participation of the citizens in any one area, the task of providing the resources to support these activities becomes quite overwhelming. From athletic fields that accommodate youth and adult sports to the undeveloped open space resources that are required for even a semi-wilderness experience, providing an outlet for these activities in a highly developed area is no easy job. Maintenance and repair of fields and facilities, staffing constraints and budgetary issues are but a few of the barriers that must be overcome when attempting to accommodate the needs of many with a limited cache of resources.

In order to most efficiently utilize the resources at a localities disposal, it is essential to adopt a local comprehensive plan that takes into account the demand placed on existing resources and to assess how these resources meet current and projected needs. Since the available resources are as varied as the activities that they support, the objective of the urban guidelines section of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan* is not to present the reader with a formula for comprehensive planning, but to provide sources for obtaining the information needed to effectively design an urban recreation plan.

The Fairfax County Park Authority has developed a planning process that acts as an exemplary model for how to most effectively meet the recreation needs of a densely populated area. Though the plan is specific to the Northern Virginia metropolitan area, it does address the philosophy, considerations and issues that are associated with any successful comprehensive plan. They were developed as a result of a demand survey directed to the urban population of Fairfax County. They resulted in a change in participation and space guidelines and the determination of sustainable carrying capacity guidelines to accommodate developed recreational activities. The planning process also developed criteria for the identification and protection of significant and sensitive natural and cultural resources. These guidelines reflect the needs of urban populations and may be applicable to other urban areas in the commonwealth. Contact the Fairfax County Park Authority, Division of Planning and Development, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035, for further information on the methodology and guidelines.

The following additional resources related to urban planning are provided for readers of the 2001 *Virginia Outdoors Plan*:

American Planning Association

122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60603
(312) 431-9100 (general)
(312) 786-6344 (Planning Advisory service and
Planners Book Service)
www.planning.org

Virginia Trails Association

P. O. Box 1132
Ashland, VA 23005
(804) 798-4160

Coalition for Smarter Growth

1415 Oronoco Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-5704
stopsprawl@aol.com

Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse

1100 17th Street, N.W., 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
(877) GRN.WAYS (toll-free)
www.trailsandgreenways.org

Table _

PARK AREA STANDARDS				
SERVICE RADIUS				
CLASS	ACRES/1,000	URBAN/ SUBURBAN	RURAL	MINIMUM SIZE
Neighborhood Acres	3	2 Miles	1 – 1 ½ Miles	5
Playground or Playlot	--	2 Miles	--	--
Community Acres	3	1 Mile	3 – 7 Miles	20
District Acres	4	5 – 7 Miles	10 – 15 Miles	50
Regional Acres	*	25 Miles	25 Miles	100
State Acres	10	1 Hour	50 Miles	600
Total Recommended Acres/1,000 Population: 20 * - Considered at a variable rate over and above local area standard.				

The following pages contain schematic sketches of various parks and recreational sites and facilities typically found at each.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND OR PLAYLOT

- + **Size**
1/4 acre and larger
- + **Service area**
Approximately five minutes walking time
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Local government
- + **Purpose**
The primary function is to provide safe play areas for pre-school and school-age children, especially in high-density areas where backyard playgrounds may be unavailable. These parks, however, can sometimes be oriented toward adult needs.
- + **Character**
The character is one of intensive use and easy accessibility. Facilities should be designed to meet the needs of local residents. When serving children, these parks should be designed for active play, while those designed for adults also should provide opportunities for passive recreation. Maintaining playground equipment is critical and should be considered in the planning stage. These areas are not normally designed for organized activities.
- + **Location**
Location is determined more by the availability of land or space than any other factor.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o playgrounds
 - o horseshoe courts
 - o shuffleboard courts
 - o basketball courts
 - o volleyball courts
 - o badminton courts

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

- + **Size**
5-20 acres
Plan at 3-acres/1,000 population
- + **Service area**
Approximately 5-15 minutes walking distance or under 1 mile driving distance
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Local government
- + **Purpose**
The primary function is to provide limited types of recreation for the entire family within easy walking distance. Facilities should be provided for all age groups.
- + **Character**
Intensive use and easy access are characteristics of this classification. Ideally, the site should have level-to-gently rolling areas to accommodate intensive use facilities, with shaded areas for passive recreation.
- + **Location**
If possible, the neighborhood park should be located near a school and/or the neighborhood center and away from railroads, major streets and other hazardous areas.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o playground
 - o picnic facilities
 - o tennis courts
 - o ball diamond
 - o horseshoe courts
 - o shuffleboard courts
 - o basketball courts
 - o football/soccer fields
 - o volleyball courts
 - o badminton courts
 - o walking trails
 - o fishing pond
 - o swimming pool
 - o bikeway
 - o recreation center

Playfields are usually dual purpose in this type of facility. They are an area for sports and running games and also serve as open space. Intensive use areas (the playground area and hard surface courts) are buffered from other activities by passive natural areas and pedestrian access corridors. Programmed activities, such as organized athletics, are often suitable in neighborhood parks. Although limited parking is provided, site design should encourage pedestrian access to the greatest extent possible.

Rural communities may want to consider including neighborhood park functions in larger community parks, which could better serve the needs of a widely dispersed local population. From an economic standpoint, it would be more beneficial for a rural locality to have a few

strategically located, well-designed, larger facilities than to invest in several small sites and not have the funds to properly develop and maintain them.

COMMUNITY PARK

- + **Size**
20-50 acres
Plan at 3-acres/1,000 population
- + **Service area**
Approximately 15 minutes driving time
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Local government
- + **Purpose**
Community parks should primarily support active recreational activities and be capable of withstanding intensive use while still containing a fair amount of open space.
- + **Character**
The site usually varies from relatively flat open space to moderately sloping wooded areas. Such a park should be adaptable to a wide variety of recreational activities. Access is gained by auto, bicycles or walking.
- + **Location**
When possible, located near the center of community with good access and service by a public transportation system.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o playgrounds
 - o picnic facilities
 - o tennis courts
 - o ball diamonds
 - o horseshoe courts
 - o shuffleboard courts
 - o basketball courts
 - o volleyball courts
 - o football/soccer fields
 - o trails: walking, hiking, biking, fitness
 - o natural area
 - o fishing lake or stream access
 - o beach and swimming area
 - o swimming pool
 - o parking area
 - o recreation center

A multitude of activities must be provided by this intensive use recreational facility. The recreation center is often the focal point of the park. Organized activities and supervised play are administered from this point. Other activities are grouped in the surrounding area. Their location depends on the natural terrain, need for control and vehicular access. Any existing natural qualities -- topography, water features, trees, etc. -- should be preserved as natural buffers between activity areas, as well as to protect the recreational environment from surrounding, incompatible influences. These natural elements also should be used to provide a space for more passive forms of recreation such as nature walks, picnicking and fishing.

In a rural setting, this park category may take the place of the neighborhood park. It can better serve a widely dispersed population than two or three smaller sites. Community parks, along with neighborhood parks (where applicable), usually meet most of the close-to-home recreational needs of most localities.

DISTRICT PARK

(City or County)

- + **Size**
50-150 acres
Plan at 4-acres/1,000 population
- + **Service area**
15-25 minutes driving time
5-15 mile service radius
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Local government
- + **Purpose**
The district park should serve the recreational needs of large portions of the local population. It should contain a wide variety of intensively developed areas for day-use recreation, while providing ample open space with generous buffers between activity areas.
- + **Character**
The site can vary from flat open space to moderately or steeply sloping topography. It should be capable of supporting a wide variety of activities with ample buffer and natural areas. A stream, lake or tidal waterfront site is very desirable. The district park needs to be accessible by automobile, as well as by pedestrians and bicycles.
- + **Location**
When possible, the district park should be located near the center of the service area. It should be on or near a major street that provides good access to the facility. In urban or suburban situations, easy access to mass transit is highly desirable. The site also should be accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o playgrounds
 - o picnic facilities
 - o tennis courts
 - o ball diamonds
 - o horseshoe courts
 - o volleyball courts
 - o basketball courts
 - o parking areas
 - o recreation centers
 - o golf (on larger sites with ample land)
 - o trails
 - o natural area
 - o lake or stream
 - o fishing/boating
 - o swimming pool and/or beach with a swimming area
 - o football/soccer fields
 - o shuffleboard courts

Recreation Center

The recreation center may be found at neighborhood, community, district, and large urban parks. At neighborhood parks, the center is usually 15,000 to 20,000 square feet. It generally will include multi-purpose rooms, arts and crafts area, game room, kitchen, lounge and lobby, restrooms and office. If a gymnasium is not available in a neighborhood school, the recreation center also may include a gymnasium and locker room facilities.

The recreation center in a larger park serving a community, district, or city will be considerably larger, from 20,000 to 80,000 square feet, and will include several multi-purpose rooms, gymnasium, child care facilities, aerobics room, racquetball courts, shower and locker rooms, game room, arts and craft area, auditorium or areas for performing arts, classrooms, concession stand, kitchen, large meeting room, restrooms, office, lounge or lobby, and some specialized areas such as a ceramics workshop or weight room. Frequently, larger centers have an indoor pool used year-round for recreational, instructional and therapeutic purposes. An important consideration in all recreational facilities is adequate storage space for equipment and supplies.

Most localities that have developed guidelines for indoor facilities have adopted a standard of 0.5 to 0.75 square feet per resident. Small centers may serve 5,000-8,000 neighborhood residents, while larger centers may well serve communities of 50,000-80,000 people.

INSERT 57: Schematic Sketch - 5 -RECREATION CENTER

REGIONAL PARK

- + **Size**
100-500 acres
No special size/1,000 population
- + **Service area**
Approximately 45 minutes driving time
25-mile service radius
- + **Administrative Responsibility**
Single or multi-jurisdiction
- + **Purpose**
Regional parks should supplement the community park system with more extensive open space areas and readily accessible passive recreational opportunities.
- + **Character**
Varied terrain, scenic views and extensive natural areas are important qualities of regional parks, along with the opportunity for participation in a variety of recreational activities.
- + **Location**
Locate in areas with significant natural characteristics. The regional park should serve several communities.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o day camping
 - o overnight camping
 - o natural area
 - o picnic facilities
 - o trails (all types)
 - o playground
 - o amphitheatre
 - o athletic fields
 - o swimming area,
(beach and/or pool)
 - o boating facilities
 - o golf
 - o fishing lake

The regional park is designed to provide recreational space for a relatively large population. The road system enables smooth vehicular flow to the various facilities, and a single main access facilitates control and reduces conflicts between use areas. Located conveniently to the circulation system are large, intensive-use areas and picnic grounds. Lakes, streams or other outstanding natural features are desirable assets. As much as 80% of the site is undeveloped usable open space to provide opportunities for hiking, nature study and other passive activities. An isolated segment of the site may be reserved for day camps.

The regional park should complement the facilities provided at other parks and is not a substitute for neighborhood, community or district facilities. In addition to the more intensively developed areas, the regional park should also offer an abundance of open space for recreational pursuits such as picnicking, hiking, nature study and enjoying the outdoors.

GREENWAY

- + **Size**
Any length, preferably longer than one mile
Typically 75-100 feet or wider
- + **Service area**
Depends upon the location, size and significance of the corridor
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Federal, state, local or public/private partnership
- + **Purpose**
Greenways are established to protect, preserve, and maintain existing natural and cultural corridors; to link population centers with recreational, educational and business areas and other population centers; and to provide recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities along these corridors by using natural features (ridgelines, steep slopes), utility rights-of-way, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and watercourses (streams, rivers, canals, etc.).
- + **Character**
Depending on the location, it can range from rugged terrain with scenic views and extensive vegetation to open level meadows. The greenway can be a separate entity or a portion of any of the other park categories.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o camping
 - o picnic facilities
 - o trails (all types)
 - o natural area
 - o winter sports
 - o historic sites
 - o fishing
 - o access points
 - o canoeing
 - o parking areas
 - o boating and facilities

STATE PARK

- + **Size**
600+ acres
Plan at 10-acres/1,000 population
- + **Service area**
Entire state
- + **Administrative responsibility**
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- + **Purpose**
To provide significant recreational experiences and protect a significant natural resource base or landscape
- + **Character**
Extensive open space and/or unique natural features in the form of views, terrain and vegetation are important qualities of the state facility.
Compatible recreational uses are a necessity. Access to a major lake, ocean or river is very desirable.
- + **Location**
 - o Usually determined by the location of areas with unique natural features and proximity to population centers.
 - o The site should meet a variety of the popular outdoor recreational activities identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*.
 - o The site must be consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
 - o The site should contain a significant natural feature -- preferably water-oriented.
 - o A single access road allows excellent control and monitoring of users to the park and serves as the backbone of the vehicular circulation system. Specialized activities are grouped in intensive use nodes along the central circulation system to provide areas for camping, picnicking, and water-oriented activities. The remaining area -- as much as 80% of the total site -- can be left as natural, undeveloped, but usable open space for such activities as hiking, horseback riding, nature study and fishing.
- + **Potential facilities**
 - o camping
 - o boating facilities
 - o picnic facilities
 - o fishing lake and/or

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| o natural area | stream access |
| o playground | o swimming pool and/or |
| o trails | swimming area and beach |
| o canoeing | o open play fields |
| o parking areas | o overnight facilities |
| o amphitheatre | o natural/historic interpretive facilities |

INSERT 61: TABLE 26 - SPACE GUIDELINES

INSERT 61: TABLE 26 - SPACE GUIDELINES (page 2)

INSERT 61: TABLE 26 - SPACE GUIDELINES (page 3)

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